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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LISBON 001854

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [PO](#) [AF](#) [RS](#) [EUN](#)
SUBJECT: A/S FRIED WITH PORTUGUESE DEFENSE STATESEC JOAO
MIRA GOMES

Classified By: Political Officer Troy Fitrell for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. Portuguese State Secretary for Defense Mira Gomes told A/S Fried that his ministry is considering a plan to lead an Operational Mentoring Liaison Team in Afghanistan in addition to Portugal's current military contributions there, although budgetary and political considerations may derail the proposal. Mira Gomes and A/S Fried agreed that Russia's aggressive foreign policy require a united response and that, with missile defense proposals on the table, Putin has a chance to prove he is serious. A/S Fried also stressed that NATO and EU operations in Kosovo must coordinate closely, regardless of complaints by Greece, Cyprus, or Turkey. As reported septel, Kosovars are not likely to declare independence unilaterally because they have faith in the West's ability to resolve the issue. A/S Fried noted that if Russia maintains its hard-line posture, another solution must be found. End summary.

Participants

12. (U) A/S Fried
Charge d, Affaires Adrienne O, Neal
Naval Attache CAPT Steve Gnassi
Pol Officer Troy Fitrell (notetaker)

Ministry of Defense State Secretary Joao Mira Gomes
Director General for Defense Planning Paulo Vizeu Pinheiro
Military Advisor LCDR Joao Paulo Codinha
Diplomatic Advisor Dr. Gilberto Sousa Jeronimo

Afghanistan

13. (C) Mira Gomes related that his ministry is studying the proposal to field an Operational Mentoring Liaison Team (OMLT) in Afghanistan, in addition to its Special Forces and Air Traffic Control contributions in that theater. Mira Gomes cautioned, however, that Portuguese overseas operations are extensive and are competing for scarce resources and political commitment. The Portuguese government has managed to maintain its commitment despite some internal objections, but that significant casualties would make that position much more difficult. Mira Gomes and A/S Fried were pleased with greater EU commitment to building institutions in Afghanistan.

Russia

14. (C) A/S Fried noted that we are taking President Putin's two recent offers on missile defense (MD) very seriously, even if the Russians themselves were not. This is a chance, A/S Fried opined, for Putin to be serious. We are hoping to develop complementary systems that provide security for NATO and partner nations. The U.S. system developed with Poland and the Czech Republic matches well with NATO developments; a mutual system with Russia would complement the other two.

A/S Fried agreed that the Polish government's recent statements were impolitic, but they had toned down the rhetoric even though they are on the receiving end of overt Russian threats.

15. (C) The Russian use of energy policy against EU and NATO member states, noted both Mira Gomes and A/S Fried, is worrying for European security and thus for American security. Europe, said A/S Fried, has a viable and important plan to develop the Nabuco pipeline to bring Caspian Basin gas resources to Europe, yet were not defending Europe's interests very well in the face of Russian objections. Putin is himself Russia's top gas negotiator, while the EU has not yet even designated a chief coordinator.

16. (C) A/S Fried stressed that Europeans and Americans alike have a Russian problem. Russia is a corporatist state with a revisionist foreign policy. Mira Gomes hoped that the EU-Russia summit will help establish a common strategic vision. A/S Fried suggested that this is unlikely, given that Putin believes Europe's divisions are permanent, when these divisions are merely a process in which the EU arrives at agreement.

NATO-EU Coordination in Kosovo

17. (C) Mira Gomes noted that the EU's ESDP program in Kosovo would be a civilian operation based on contributions of police. Portugal has extensive police experience in the Balkans and intends to contribute, but that the ESDP operation will need the protection of the NATO forces, thus requiring cooperative rules of engagement to be devised beforehand. The stalemate, he continued, between Turkey on one hand and Cyprus and Greece on the other must be resolved. A/S Fried noted that NAT-EU coordination on the ground in

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Kosovo needed to occur at the working level and that we must not allow Greece or Turkey to block this procedurally. We should, he noted, manage the coordination anyway. Should Greece or Turkey complain, we must ignore them. A/S Fried hoped that Portugal was prepared to do what needed to be done.

Kosovo

18. (C) A/S Fried summarized his recent meetings in the Balkans and expressed the belief that the Kosovars will not make a unilateral declaration for the time being. The U.S. is committed to working with the EU on this issue and is not giving up on the UNSCR. Mira Gomes noted the need to achieve unity both within the EU and between the EU and the U.S. A/S Fried noted that if Russia maintains its hard-line posture, another solution must be found.

Comment

19. (C) Mira Gomes' announcement that the Portuguese are actively considering leading an OMLT is welcome. We have pressed the Portuguese to increase their contributions in Afghanistan, but the number and size of Portugal's overseas deployments, coupled with an austerity budget, had previously led the Portuguese to decline.
Hoffman